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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: FOREIGN MINISTER TAZHIN BRIEFED ON
AFGHAN RECONCILIATION POLICY

REF: STATE 117445 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The Ambassador delivered reftel demarche on U.S. policy on Afghan reconciliation to Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin on November 18, stressing that reconciliation comes with strict conditions that insurgents must lay down their arms, return to normal life, recognize the democratically elected Afghan government, and have no ties to Al-Qaeda. The Ambassador thanked Tazhin for Kazakhstan's support for Coalition efforts in Afghanistan -- in particular, for the fact that the Kazakhstani government recently requested parliamentary ratification of bilateral agreements on OEF overflights and diverts. (COMMENT: The government has been implementing both agreements since they were signed in 2001 and 2002, respectively, but ratification will put them on more solid domestic legal ground. END COMMENT.)

¶2. (C) Tazhin, who was accompanied by Kazakhstani Ambassador to Afghanistan Agybay Smagulov, expressed appreciation for the policy clarification and promised to pass the non-paper the Ambassador left summarizing the demarche to President Nazarbayev. President Karzai's September 30 Eid message, he explained, had been "very confusing" and had caused concerns. Some analysts had interpreted his remarks as meaning that the Afghan government was seeking cooperation with the Taliban. Tazhin welcomed the idea of reconciliation -- a military solution is not possible, he acknowledged -- while agreeing that strict conditionality is essential. He wondered, however, how amenable the Taliban would be to such conditions, given their real intentions. The Ambassador made clear that the aim is to peel off small groups willing to reconcile, weakening the insurgency over time.

¶3. (C) Tazhin expressed concern that the situation in Afghanistan might lead to the dissolution of the country down the road. The Ambassador responded that the chaos Afghanistan has experienced since 1979 has been due to outside interference, and that when the Afghans are left to their own devices and draw on their own political traditions, they find accommodations. Tazhin agreed that Afghanistan's

traditional political institutions can play an important role in achieving political consensus -- while he also praised Karzai as "a positive development in a difficult environment." He suggested there are serious tensions between ongoing efforts to promote democracy and the traditional political institutions. The Ambassador said the two need to be reconciled, since democracy can only work if it accords with traditions and political reality.

HOAGLAND